

# Communication Matters

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## CapTel Users Comment

*" I just set up and started using the CapTel phone - and the phone and service are wonderful! My wife lost almost all of her hearing! CapTel has been so necessary for us! It is great! My wife finally feels connected!"*

- Spouse of New CapTel User

*"I had a wonderful experience with CapTel phone! My computer printer has been on the fritz for sometime... It refuses to print in color. I finally called the company via CapTel. Wonderful! In fact, it was fun, even for the Service Rep. All of the details were carefully explained and I was able to complete the transaction MYSELF! A new printer, including copier and scanner will be delivered to me in 5 to 7 days. Yay!"*

- New CapTel User

## Captioned Telephone Service Now Available in Michigan

Do you know someone who is unable to hear well on the telephone?

Is that person able to speak clearly, but feels hampered by the slowness of a TTY and/or VCO?

Is fluid conversation difficult, even with an amplified phone?

According to a recent press release, The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) announced that AT&T, the state's approved Telecommunication Relay Provider, is now offering Captioned Telephone (CapTel) Service for hard of hearing individuals in Michigan. CapTel service is available to all telephone customers in Michigan. For a limited time, the CapTel telephone needed for this service is available for a reduced price of \$99 (normally \$495).



CapTel makes using the telephone as easy as using a standard telephone. It allows the user to listen to and read word-for-word captions of their conversation. It is especially useful for individuals who have good speech but do not hear well over the phone.

"The CapTel service is vital to individuals who have difficulty hearing what the other party says," noted MPSC Chairman J. Peter Lark. "My fellow Commissioners and I are pleased that the CapTel phone is now available to Michigan customers." The MPSC is an agency within the Department of Labor & Economic Growth.

Those Michigan residents interested in the CapTel service or products can call toll-free 1-800-233-9130 (V/TTY) or visit the Web site: <http://www.weitbrecht.com/statecaptel/MI.phtml>

# Bill Introduced in Michigan to Require Use of Qualified Interpreters

Rep. John Gleason has introduced a long-promised bill that would require the courts, police, schools, colleges, hospitals, doctor's offices, banks, credit unions, employers and lawyers to provide accommodations to employ qualified sign language interpreters under rules promulgated by the Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The Michigan House bill number, HB 6087, introduced on May 18, 2006, may be the most important bill DODHH has been pushing for years. It will have a very positive impact on the interpreters providing effective communication resulting in equal access for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind adults and children who use interpreter services as well as the general public.

## What does the bill do?

1. It amends the existing Deaf Person's Interpreter Act of 1982 that covers the courts and administrative hearings only.
2. It expands coverage to educational institutions, medical providers, financial institutions, legal arenas, employers and state and local governments.
3. It defines "qualified sign language and oral interpreter."
4. It adds "Deafblind person" to definitions.
5. It authorizes DODHH to promulgate administrative rules covering requirements for certification, testing, application fees, and application and grievance procedures.
6. An interpreter who engages in interpreting

without qualifications will be punished by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine not more than \$10,000 and not less than \$1,000, or both.

7. An appointing authority who appoints an unqualified interpreter shall be punished by a fine not more than \$10,000 and not less than \$1,000.

For a copy of the bill, go to [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org) and enter 6087 in the bill search number box. To see a Power Point about the bill visit the DODHH web site at: <http://www.mcdc-dodhh.org/>

## Why this bill?

Michigan Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind adults and children have experienced negative consequences from using non-qualified interpreters provided to them over the years. The state/local governments and public accommodations who provide interpreters as required by state and federal laws must hire qualified interpreters under this proposed law. The legislation will hopefully increase recognition of interpreters as professional service providers when this bill becomes law. Michigan will join with the growing number of states with interpreter licensure/standards legislation. For list of states, see [www.rid.org/lic.html](http://www.rid.org/lic.html).

Like all bills in the Michigan House and Senate, the bill will die on December 31, 2006 if there is no action on it. It is important that you express your thoughts to your local representative and senator soon. To find a representative, look up in [www.house.mi.gov](http://www.house.mi.gov) and [www.senate.mi.gov](http://www.senate.mi.gov) by entering your zip code.

## DODHH Rights Handbook

DODHH is pleased to present the Handbook, a guide for creating a barrier free communication environment for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf/Blind persons, businesses, educational institutions, employers, government agencies and service providers. The Handbook is 165 pages. The pdf edition has bookmarks that will lead readers to specific chapters. The Handbook is available on CD. Please contact [dodhh@michigan.gov](mailto:dodhh@michigan.gov) for a free copy or click: <http://www.mcdc-dodhh.org/>

## Teach Me English with American Sign Language

This interactive video course was designed for deaf and hard of hearing individuals who constantly struggle with understanding English and want to learn English quickly and correctly. It is also suitable for anyone with a limited education and is good for everyone to use at home, the office, or as a supplement to a school program or a training program.

Read more at [www.deaftutor.com](http://www.deaftutor.com)



## EEOC Fact Sheet

# Q & A about Deafness and Hearing Impairments in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act

[www.eeoc.gov/facts/deafness.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/deafness.html)

This new Q&A publication includes many real-life examples that illustrate the kinds of jobs that people with hearing loss successfully perform and the wide range of accommodations available. Topics addressed in the document include:

- \* When a hearing loss is a disability under the ADA;
- \* When an employer may ask an applicant or employee about a hearing impairment and what it should do if an applicant voluntarily discloses the impairment;
- \* What type of reasonable accommodation an applicant or employee with a hearing disability may need; and
- \* What an employer should do if it has safety concerns about an applicant or employee with a hearing impairment.

According to published reports, between 2000 and 2004, estimates of the number of people in the United States with a self-described "hearing difficulty" ranged from 28.6 million to 31.5 million. A "hearing difficulty" can refer to the effects of many different hearing impairments of varying degrees. The number of individuals with hearing difficulty is expected to rise rapidly by the year 2010 when the baby-boomer generation reaches age 65. As compared to other age groups, the percentage of individuals with hearing difficulty is greatest among those individuals age 65 and above.

## Depression & Anxiety with Hearing Loss

According to Terry Portis, Director of the Hearing Loss Association of America, a 2005 study in Great Britain found **"the rate of depression for late-deafened adults was five times the national average, and the rate of severe anxiety was 2.5 times the national average."** The research was conducted by the LINK Centre in Great Britain.

- Hearing Loss Magazine, May/June 2006

# A Life After Deafness

A novel by George B. Joslin, retired VR counselor

## The Story

Go with Rick Snider, a retired rehabilitation counselor, as he introduces you to many Deaf people. Learn more about deafness, Deaf culture, and American Sign Language from "real" Deaf people. Their stories reveal much about their culture.

Struggle along with Anna as she breaks away from domineering parents. Feel the frustration of Angie Butler and her mainstreamed pupil, Arnie. Follow Freddie and his problems with English. Enjoy Anna and Bob as they go from friends to marriage to parenthood.

You will meet fifty Deaf people in *A Life After Deafness* -- good and bad, employed or on SSI, old and young.

And along the way, there is a murder!!!

*A Life After Deafness* is billed as a great resource for ASL and ITP students as an adjunct to their textbooks and classroom instruction. Deaf people may want to give or recommend this book to friends and family members who want to know more about deafness, Deaf culture, and ASL.

## The Author

Retired in 1997 in Springfield, MO, after 40 years of service to Deaf people in rehabilitation, interpreting, in four states. He led workshops for interpreters and Deaf leaders in 39 states. He has served as interpreter and interpreter trainer, but now is a late deafened adult, and a consumer of interpreting services! He is the author of a textbook for teaching ASL and an ASL dictionary. This novel is his first work of fiction. He writes with ASL students and interpreter trainees in mind, but others will enjoy learning more about deafness and Deaf culture from this story.

*"From his unique perspective as both insider and outsider, the story's narrator gives the reader a poignant, yet entertaining, view of daily life in the Deaf community."* - LindaLee Massoud, former interpreter trainer and coordinator, MI

Price: \$15.00 (+\$5.50 s/h)

Order on line at: [www.letssignllc.com](http://www.letssignllc.com)

("quick find" word = "Life")

E-mail: [letssign@bellsouth.net](mailto:letssign@bellsouth.net)

For more information, and to read the first twenty pages, see: <http://www.yourbook.com/BookInfo/IP18109-06.asp>

## Hearing Aids and Cell Phones

# Choosing a Cell Phone Becomes Easier this Fall!

- Nan Asher, Executive Director of Michigan Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

As of September 18, 2006, cell phones must list code numbers on the packaging to specify different types of hearing aid compatibility.

### Telecoil Users

If you have a telecoil (t-switch) on your hearing aid AND you like to use it for hearing on the telephone, then look for a T3 or T4 rating on the phone. T3 meets FCC guidelines and T4 exceeds the guidelines.



### Without Telecoil

If you don't have a telecoil, or if you don't care to use it, then look for an M3 or M4 rating on the cell phone. M3 meets the FCC guidelines for hearing aid microphone compatibility, and M4 exceeds the guidelines. The t-coil will make it easier to hear on the phone in noisy situations, as the hearing aid microphone is off when the t-coil is on. Some users have discovered good t-coils included in phones marked with M3 or M4, though not required by the FCC.

### Testing the Phone

It is always recommended to test a cell phone before purchase. Some retail outlets are more willing to allow this than others. Dial 611 and listen to a recording to assess sound quality. Try adjusting the cell phone positioning to find the "sweet spot" where the signal is clearest. There should be no distortion or static.

If you cannot hear on the phone at all, or prefer to use portable e-mail, instant or text messaging, consider a unit with a qwerty keypad such as Sidekick. Many cell phones can receive text messages, but typing on the numeric pad can be tiresome. Blackberry, Ogo, Treo, and some cell phones have both.

For cellular TTY calls there are a variety of portable TTY's that connect to a cell phone using the headphone jack. The smallest is the PocketComm TTY/VCO combo.

## Auditrain

# A Training Program to Improve Communication Skills for Cochlear Implant (CI) Users

AUDITRAIN is a training program designed to help adult CI users improve their communication skills. It consists of twenty-two individual lesson plans, each of which contains both synthetic and analytic exercises. The synthetic materials – question and answer exercises, list of common sentences around a central theme, word matrices and many other exercised – are designed to help clients optimize the use of their CI systems in everyday situations.

For more information regarding the Aural Rehabilitation Program, please contact MED-EL via e-mail at [implants@medelus.com](mailto:implants@medelus.com).

Auditrain sells for \$120.

An order form is available at: [www.audiologyonline.com/management/uploads/news/3medel2603.pdf](http://www.audiologyonline.com/management/uploads/news/3medel2603.pdf)

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## MoPix

Read a State Journal Article on the latest technology that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind to enjoy the movies! MoPix is available in Lansing now!

This technology came to the region because of the hard work of Michigan citizens including: Michigan Commission for the Blind, Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

<http://lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060727/NEWS01/607270367&SearchID=73252434091034>

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## vMeeting

# Connecting Everyone at Once

Imagine having several people in different regions, some using an interpreter who is in yet another region, all having a conversation in real time. It is possible!

Learn more about vMeeting at [www.csdvrs.com](http://www.csdvrs.com), click Customer Support or E-mail: [vrshelp@c-s-d.org](mailto:vrshelp@c-s-d.org)